How To: A Process for Successful Partnerships

Partnership Definition

- **A partnership IS:**
  - A written agreement between the parties.
  - Mutual interest in, mutual benefits from, or mutually desired goals of a common objective related to the mission of the agency.
  - Appropriate legal authority.

Partnership Definition

- **A partnership IS:**
  - Consistency with agency plans, policies and priorities.
  - Of evident public benefit.
  - A realistic timeframe with sufficient lead time to acquire funding, materials and necessary approvals.

Partnership Definition

- **A partnership is NOT:**
  - Conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest or preferential treatment of one entity over another.
  - Endorsement of commercial products, services or entities.

Partnership Definition

- **A partnership is NOT:**
  - Circumvention of applicable legal requirements in areas such as:
    - procurement
    - personnel or labor laws
    - printing, publishing or audiovisual production
    - issuance of special use permits
  - Marketing or promotion of partners in any way, except for recognition of the contribution.

Evaluate the Proposed Work

- Is it consistent with approved plans?
- Is it a high priority?
- Is a partnership the best way?
- Are there legal or policy issues?
- Is there buy-in from your organization?

Establish Common Understanding

- Are the right people at the table?
- Identify key issues and how to address them.
- Define organization requirements and constraints for each partner.

Establish Common Understanding

- Evaluate partner's skills related to the proposed work.
- List outcomes each partner needs.
- Identify which desired outcomes are shared.
- Identify what each partner will actually invest.

Partnership Work Plan

- Reach consensus on each partner's responsibilities
- Define primary tasks and products
- Identify timeframe and milestones for work

Partnership Work Plan

- Assign completion dates and who is responsible
- Identify potential obstacles and strategies to minimize them
- Define each partner's review, approval and decision making processes

Negotiating and Drafting the Agreement

- Research best model for existing agreements
- Use clear language that is readily understood and followed
- Prepare electronic first draft for review
- After reaching consensus on draft, get review and approval by all parties

Managing Agreements and the Work

- Assign staff liaisons for monitoring and evaluating
- Obtain full support of the signers and top level management
- Most partnerships are 3-5+ years requiring incremental timetables and measures
- It is important to be realistic and adjust when appropriate

Success Factors

- Building a Foundation for Partnerships
- Establishing Common Ground
- Sustaining Partnerships
- Celebrating Success and Measuring Progress

Success Factors

- **Building a Foundation for Partnerships**
  - Ensure good communication
  - Maintain an environment of trust
  - Leave your ego and control at the door
  - Be courteous and diplomatic
  - Respect the right to disagree: Act on consensus

Communication, Understanding and Trust

Success Factors

- **Establishing Common Ground**
  - Focus on the important needs
  - Adopt a shared vision
  - Understand each partner's mission and organizational culture
  - Utilize the strengths of each partner

Shared Vision, Clear Goals and Knowledge of Partner Strengths and Limitations

Success Factors

- **Sustaining Partnerships**
  - Negotiate a formal agreement
  - Ensure that the partnership is owned by the whole organization
  - Find ways through the red tape
  - Build step by step

Evolution, Ownership and Financing

Success Factors

- **Sustaining Partnerships**
  - Diversify your funding sources
  - Constantly seek out the best practice
  - Honor your commitments
  - Network and build relationships

Evolution, Ownership and Financing

Success Factors

- **Celebrating Success and Measuring Progress**
  - Make partnerships a win-win
  - Strive for excellence
  - Celebrate success
  - Put in place mechanisms to re-enforce the partnership

Rewards, Recognition and Indicators of Success

Transition Memo

- **Intended to focus on establishing and maintaining community relationships associated with ongoing partnerships and collaborative work.**
- **Is not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities and/or projects.**
- **Partnership and collaborative efforts that have formal agreements in place should be referenced with a brief description of the activity to date.**

Transition Memo

- **Describe the current partnership and collaborative efforts underway at your project.**
- **Commitments or schedules associated with current partnership and collaborative efforts.**
- **Current working agreements or procedures.**
- **Strategy for meeting and getting to know your community.**